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RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA PRIORITY 1603
RUEHDBU/AMEMBASSY DUSHANBE PRIORITY
RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL PRIORITY 6048
RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU PRIORITY 6986
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 9160
RUEHNT/AMEMBASSY TASHKENT PRIORITY 1734
RUEHKP/AMCONSUL KARACHI PRIORITY 2540
RUEHLH/AMCONSUL LAHORE PRIORITY 9932
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 ISLAMABAD 016994

SIPDIS

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (PARA MARKINGS)

SIPDIS
NOFORN

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TAGS: [PK](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [PINR](#)
SUBJECT: BALOCHISTAN (4): WHO'S WHO - THE BALOCH TRIBES

REF: A. ISLAMABAD 14349
[1](#)B. ISLAMABAD 16269
[1](#)C. ISLAMABAD 16944
[1](#)D. ISLAMABAD 16962
[1](#)E. ISLAMABAD 16987

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Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Peter W. Bodde,
Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary and Introduction: The Baloch people give their name to Balochistan Province in Pakistan, where roughly two thirds of them live, as well as Sistan-va-Baluchestan Province in Iran. The Baloch are further spread across the southern reaches of Afghanistan. Baloch society is tribal, with power traditionally concentrated in the hands of autocratic princes, known as "sardars," who have near totalitarian control over the lives of their tribes. Baloch nationalist and tribal leaders share a fundamental belief that the federal government has not given the province its fair share of the region's mineral wealth, but many non-sardari nationalists disapprove of the violent tactics employed by some tribal leaders to wring concessions out of the federal government. There seems little support in the province, beyond the Bugti tribe, for the current insurgency. Nationalist leaders admit that calls for Baloch independence are nothing more than political rhetoric, and that they really want a voice in the province's development and a greater percentage of the revenues generated by the province's natural resources. This cable is the fourth in a series of cables on Balochistan. (Note: This cable was drafted prior to the reported death of Nawab Akbar Khan Bugti on August 26 (Ref C). End note.) End summary.

Sub-Provincial Cleavages

[1](#)2. (C) The concerns and demands of the people of the Makran

Coast, where the seaport of Gwadar is located, differ from those of the tribes of eastern Balochistan, home of the province's natural gas and coal fields. The coastal region is not dominated by tribal sardars as is the eastern quarter. It is less tribal, better educated, more middle class and politically aware than the rest of province.

¶3. (C/NF) The eastern portion of Balochistan has been dominated by three sardars (Nawab Akbar Khan Bugti, Nawab Khair Bux Marri, and Sardar Attaullah Mengal. These three sardars, out of more than 60 in the province, have each been alternately in and out of government and in and out of jail; the common denominator between them is their militant opposition to the federal government in Islamabad. The tribal society that these sardars oversee has been described as "feudal militarism," in which the sardars call upon tribal militias to assert their power. The traditional exchange underlying this system is for the sardars to dispense booty or property rights in return for support. This system basically remains intact, but today favors are generally traded for votes. The system, however, has been criticized for enriching the sardars but not their followers. There are around 46 Baloch tribes--the major ones include the Bugti, Marri, Mengal, Bizenjo, Jamali, and Rind--and roughly 70 sardars in Balochistan.

¶4. (C) Some Baloch nationalists, while sympathetic to the sardars' demands, disapprove of their violence, seeing their brand of nationalism as self-serving and noting that most Baloch people would be satisfied with greater home-rule within Pakistan.

The Big Three

¶5. (C/NF) Nawab Akbar Khan Bugti, who was 79 when killed in an
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August 26, 2006 GOP attack on his mountain hiding place (Ref C), had led his tribe since 1946. He has served as provincial governor, provincial chief minister and as a member of the National Assembly as late as 1999. He also led intermittent armed rebellions against the federal government since the 1970s. Favoring expansive provincial autonomy and open to independence, Bugti could also be motivated by cash and is rumored to have been bought off by the government at various points in his career. Nawab Bugti was widely believed to have pocketed the vast majority of royalties from the Sui gas fields on his tribe's territory, rather than spreading the wealth amongst the tribe or investing in development projects in his tribal territory. Often mired in local tribal and honor issues to the detriment of his political goals, he led the Jamhoori Watan Party (JWP), which has four seats in the provincial assembly, one in the National Assembly, and two in the federal Senate. His militia had an estimated 5,000 fighters in 2004, but has been decimated by Pakistani security forces during recent months of fighting.

¶6. (C/NF) Nawab Khair Bux Marri, an octogenarian, lives in Karachi and has the reputation of being a leftist and an uncompromising hardliner. Although he publicly demands complete independence for Balochistan, he may also negotiate with the government to avoid being left out on development funds and royalties. According to one Embassy interlocutor, Marri is able to rule his tribe from Karachi because he has built a tribal "institution" that does not depend on his presence. Like Bugti, he has fought the government intermittently over the decades. His tribal territory includes the mountainous stretches of Kohlu and Loralai districts, an area thought to have oil reserves, but in which Marri has blocked exploration. He heads the Baloch Haq Tawar party, which only has representation at the district level. His militia is also estimated at roughly 5,000 men, and is usually considered the have the best-trained and most hardcore fighters. Many believe that the elusive Balochistan

Liberation Army (BLA) is actually an avatar of Marri's militia.

¶7. (C/NF) Sardar Attaullah Mengal, age mid 70s, is the most politically active and astute of the three rebel sardars, leading the militarily weaker but more numerous Mengal tribe. He served as Balochistan's Chief Minister in 1971-73. Unlike Nawabs Bugti and Marri, Mengal has sought to broaden his nationalist appeal beyond his tribe. He controls the areas of Khuzdar, Kharan, and parts of Bolan and Sibi. He has provided political support to the current uprising; some evidence indicates that his tribe has supplied guns and funds to Bugti and Marri. His roughly 4,000-strong militia has not joined in the 2005-06 insurgency. He leads the Balochistan National Party-Mengal (BNP-M), which has two seats in the provincial assembly, one in the National Assembly, and one in the federal Senate. His son Akhtar Mengal was Balochistan's chief minister in 1997.

Other Major Baloch Players

¶8. (C) Dr. Abdul Hayee Baloch, president of the National Party, trained as a medical doctor but made his career in politics. Born in Bolan, he entered politics in the Gwadar area. His National Party represents the non-sardari Baloch middle class in urban areas, and the coastal Makran population. He favors the abolition of the sardari system, believing that the sardars are fighting for their own financial benefit and not the province's. He believes increased provincial autonomy is critical for the Balochistan's development and opposes political rights for Settlers, but condemns violence. The National Party has four seats in the provincial assembly and one in the federal Senate.

¶9. (C) Mohim Khan Baloch is a middle class politician who

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heads the Balochistan National Party-Awami (BNP-A). He favors provincial autonomy but opposes independence. He lost much of his popular credibility when he broke ranks with the other nationalist leaders and joined the Musharraf government in 2002, largely to obtain a Senate seat. His condemnation of GOP actions during the current insurrection cost him his Senate seat earlier this year. The BNP-A's five seats in the provincial assembly are part of the ruling coalition, and the party has one seat in the federal Senate, which it picked up in the election that Mohim Khan Baloch was defeated.

Comment

¶10. (C/NF) Currently, there is little unity among the Baloch nationalists or among the sardars. In the provincial assembly the nationalist and sardar parties hold just ten of 65 seats; the Pakistan Muslim League, which President Musharraf relies on to run the country, has 23 seats in the assembly, and rules in tandem with the religious coalition Muttahida Majlis-i-Amal, which has 17 seats. In the national assembly the nationalist and sardari parties hold a handful of the 342 seats. Fractured by tribal affiliation, geography, political orientation, and personal rivalry, Baloch are unlikely to make common cause against the Government--which explains the Army's emerging strategy of taking on the sardars one by one, while concurrently promising to address the overall grievances of the Baloch tribes. End comment.

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